

Relocating Your Pet to Australia

A practical guide for importing dogs and cats, from preparation and veterinary testing to air travel and quarantine.

Personally managed by Julia | Fly Your Tail



Australia requires long-term planning.

The Australian Department of Agriculture recommends allowing at least 6 months. Dogs and cats must meet strict import conditions, arrive as manifested cargo into Melbourne, and complete post-entry quarantine unless a specific exception applies.

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The essentials before you begin

Australia protects its animal-health status through strict biosecurity controls. The exact process depends on the country of export, the pet's species, identity-verification status, vaccination history and current government conditions.

Preparation time	Allow at least 6 months; some cases require longer.
Eligible origins	Direct import is only permitted from an approved country. Pets in a non-approved country must move to an approved country and complete the required preparation there.
Arrival airport	Dogs and cats must normally arrive directly at Melbourne International Airport.
Travel method	Pets must travel as manifested cargo, not in the passenger cabin or as checked baggage.
Import permit	A valid Australian biosecurity import permit is generally required for Group 2 and Group 3 imports.
Quarantine	Most imported dogs and cats complete at least 10 or 30 days at the government Post Entry Quarantine facility in Mickleham, Victoria.

Pets and breeds that may not be eligible

- Some pure-bred dogs are prohibited, including Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, Japanese Tosa, American Pit Bull Terrier/Pit Bull Terrier and Perro de Presa Canario/Presa Canario.
- Certain dog-wolf hybrids and non-domestic cat hybrids are prohibited.
- As of 1 March 2026, Bengal cats are no longer permitted to enter Australia.
- Eligibility must be checked before veterinary preparation or transport is booked.

Do not start with the flight.

First confirm that the pet, country of export and proposed timeline are eligible. A flight booking cannot compensate for missing biosecurity preparation.

Your export-country group determines the process

Australia divides approved export countries into groups based on rabies status and government controls. The official step-by-step guide for the country of export is the controlling reference.

Group	General profile	Typical implications
Group 1	New Zealand	A different, simpler pathway applies. Import permit and quarantine rules differ from Group 2 and 3.
Group 2	Approved rabies-free or well-controlled countries	Import permit, official preparation, manifested cargo to Melbourne and generally a minimum 10-day quarantine.
Group 3	Approved countries where rabies is present or controlled differently	Rabies vaccination, RNATT, 180-day waiting period, import permit, official preparation and 10- or 30-day quarantine depending on identity verification and compliance.
Non-approved	Countries not authorised for direct export	The pet cannot travel directly to Australia. It must first move to an approved country and complete the required residency and preparation there.

Typical planning timeline for a Group 3 pet

Month 0	Confirm eligibility, implant/read microchip and arrange official identity verification where available.
Month 0-1	Confirm rabies vaccination validity and complete the RNATT at an accepted laboratory.
180-day period	The pet cannot be exported until at least 180 days after the RNATT sample is received by the laboratory.
During waiting period	Apply for the import permit, reserve quarantine, plan the flight and complete species-specific tests/treatments.
Final weeks	Complete final veterinary examinations, parasite treatments, official health certificate and government endorsement.
Travel and arrival	Manifested cargo to Melbourne, transfer by biosecurity officers to Mickleham, quarantine and release.

Step-by-step relocation pathway

1**Eligibility and route assessment**

Confirm the country group, species, breed eligibility, residency history, proposed travel date and suitable airline route.

2**Microchip and identity verification**

The microchip must be readable and consistently recorded. For many Group 3 pets, official identity verification before RNATT preparation is required to qualify for the shorter quarantine period.

3**Rabies preparation and RNATT**

For Group 3 pets, maintain a valid rabies vaccination, complete an accepted RNATT and observe the mandatory 180-day waiting period.

4**Import permit application**

Apply through Australia's BICON system with the required declarations, test reports and supporting documents.

5**Quarantine reservation**

Reserve the pet's stay at the Post Entry Quarantine facility in Mickleham. Capacity and permitted arrival windows must align with the flight.

Step-by-step relocation pathway (continued)

6**Veterinary tests and treatments**

Complete all dog- or cat-specific testing, parasite treatments and examinations within the exact time windows stated in the permit and official guide.

7**Official export certification**

The competent authority or official government veterinarian must complete and endorse the required export health documents.

8**Manifested-cargo transport**

The pet travels in an airline-accepted kennel directly to Melbourne International Airport and is transferred to quarantine by Australian biosecurity officers.

9**Quarantine and release**

Documents and health are checked in Mickleham. Release occurs after the required period if there are no compliance or health concerns.

VETERINARY PREPARATION

What may be required

The list below is an overview, not a substitute for the country-specific import permit and official step-by-step guide. Exact tests, treatments, laboratories and timing windows differ between dogs and cats and between export countries.

Core requirements	Additional requirements that may apply
• Readable ISO-compatible microchip • Continuous vaccination validity where required • Rabies vaccination and RNATT for Group 3 pets • Official identity verification where applicable • Import permit and quarantine reservation • Final clinical examination and official health certification	• External and internal parasite treatments • Dog-specific disease testing and reproductive-status declarations • Leptospira vaccination or testing, depending on conditions • Brucella canis, Leishmania, Ehrlichia or other testing where specified • Special rules for pregnant animals, intact dogs or animals with medical needs • Additional documentation for returning Australian pets or assistance dogs

RNATT essentials for Group 3 pets

- The blood sample must be tested by an accepted laboratory and achieve the required result.
- The 180-day waiting period is calculated from the date the sample is received by the laboratory.
- The RNATT is generally valid for 12 months from the blood-sampling date under current Australian rules.
- Rabies vaccination must remain continuously valid through export.
- A lapse in vaccination or an incorrectly verified identity can affect eligibility and quarantine duration.

Timing errors are expensive.

A treatment completed one day outside the permitted window, an inconsistent microchip number or a missing government endorsement can delay travel, extend quarantine or require documents and tests to be repeated.

The flight to Melbourne and quarantine

Air travel

- Dogs and cats must normally arrive directly at Melbourne International Airport.
- They must travel as manifested cargo; passenger-cabin and accompanied-baggage entry are not permitted for ordinary pets.
- The airline makes the final decision on acceptance, kennel suitability, aircraft compatibility and operational restrictions.
- The travel kennel must meet the airline's requirements and applicable IATA Live Animals Regulations.
- Sedation is generally not recommended for air travel and may be refused by the airline.

Post Entry Quarantine at Mickleham

- Australian biosecurity officers collect the pet from Melbourne Airport and transfer it to the government facility.
- Most animals undergo a minimum 10- or 30-day stay under current import conditions.
- A Group 3 pet that does not complete the recognised pre-export identity-verification process may require at least 30 days.
- Visiting is generally not permitted during the short quarantine isolation period.
- Any document discrepancy, health concern or required investigation may delay release or extend the stay.
- After release, the owner or authorised agent arranges collection or onward domestic transport.

Government charges to budget for

As published by the Australian Department of Agriculture in July 2026, the estimated government cost for one cat or dog undergoing the minimum 10-day quarantine is approximately AUD 3,114; for a minimum 30-day quarantine, approximately AUD 4,234.

These figures are indicative government permit/quarantine costs only. They do not include veterinary preparation, laboratory testing, travel kennel, airline freight, origin handling, export certification, agent fees, destination delivery or unexpected charges.

RISK CONTROL

Common mistakes that delay Australian imports

Starting too late: Australia's process is driven by mandatory waiting periods and official appointment availability.

Preparing in a non-approved country: Direct export is not permitted; the pet may need a long relocation and residency period in an approved country first.

Microchip inconsistencies: Every certificate, laboratory report, permit and airline document must refer to the same readable microchip.

RNATT or vaccination timing errors: An invalid sequence or lapse can restart preparation and affect quarantine eligibility.

Booking the flight before quarantine: The permitted arrival date and Mickleham reservation must align with the airline schedule.

Using an unsuitable kennel: Incorrect dimensions or construction can lead to airline refusal at cargo acceptance.

Assuming all dogs and cats are eligible: Prohibited dog breeds, wolf hybrids and certain cat hybrids cannot be imported.

Treating the permit as the final checklist: The permit, official guide, health certificate and airline requirements must all be read together.

Before booking, confirm these 10 points

- The country of export is approved.
- The breed and species are eligible.
- The pet's microchip is readable and correctly recorded.
- Identity verification has been completed where required.
- Rabies vaccination and RNATT timing are valid.
- The import permit has been granted.
- The quarantine reservation is confirmed.
- All tests and treatments are scheduled within the correct windows.
- The airline route arrives directly into Melbourne and accepts the pet.
- The travel kennel has been reviewed before cargo acceptance.

How we support an Australia relocation

Fly Your Tail can manage the complete journey or only the stages where specialist support is required. Every case is personally coordinated by Julia, with one point of contact across veterinary preparation, documentation and transport.

- Eligibility and export-country assessment
- Preparation timeline and veterinary instructions
- RNATT sample-logistics coordination where required
- Import-permit and quarantine planning support
- Document review and official-certificate coordination
- Travel-kennel sizing and suitability review
- Airline, cargo, route and origin-handling coordination
- Travel-day monitoring and post-quarantine delivery planning

Planning a move to Australia?

Send Fly Your Tail your pet's species, breed, age, weight, measurements, current country, destination city, vaccination history and preferred travel date for an individual assessment.

Official references used for this guide

Australian Department of Agriculture - Bringing cats and dogs to Australia

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/cats-dogs>

Step-by-step import guides

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/cats-dogs/how-to-import/step-by-step-guides>

Cats and dogs frequently asked questions

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/cats-dogs/frequently-asked-questions>

Quarantine in Australia and Mickleham facility

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/cats-dogs/quarantine-in-australia>

Quarantine fees and charges

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/cats-dogs/quarantine-facilities-and-fees/fees>

BICON - Australian Biosecurity Import Conditions

<https://bicon.agriculture.gov.au/>

Important disclaimer

This guide is general information prepared in August 2026. Australian government requirements, airline policies, fees and country classifications can change. The current BICON import conditions, the pet's import permit and instructions from the competent authorities take precedence. Fly Your Tail verifies the applicable requirements for each individual case before travel.